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## Inside Washington



# How a Famous Red Manipulated U.S. Media

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"Journalist" Wilfred Burchett said in personal letters to his family that he was on the payroll of at least one Communist government and received military decorations from another. These revelations have been made in Australia by Politics Prof. Robert Manne of LaTrobe University, the first person to study Burchett's personal papers since his death in 1968. Manne's findings appear in the August 1983 issue of *Quadrant* magazine.

In a letter from Peking dated April 16, 1951, Burchett wrote his father: "I don't have to worry about finances here. . . . I am relieved of financial cares and given facilities. . . . What I need comes to me, from food and writing paper and typewriter ribbons. I [just] sign for it. . . . I would do anything at all for their [Chinese Communist] people and government."

Burchett was as good as his word. He followed Chinese Communist troops into North Korea and became a leading propagandist against U.S. and allied troops, through writings and broadcasts. He specialized in crafting atrocity stories, including the infamous charges of the use of germ warfare by the United States, allegations of torture against POWs and deliberate bombing of civilians.

The Americans' "destruction of Korea was worse than anything the Nazis did [in] Poland," reported Burchett. They were involved in a "monstrous slaughter of scores of thousands of Korean civilians in cold blood" and displayed "master race arrogance."

According to one Burchett dispatch: "American troops turned machine guns on demonstrators and hurled hand grenades into their midst." In efforts by American authorities to persuade POWs to desert the North Korean regime, "the torture rooms, the gas chambers, the steam-heat rooms, the branding irons and the tattooers' needles and the gallows were kept busy," reported Burchett.

In fabricating these atrocity stories, Burchett relied mostly on his imagination, fired by a deep hatred of Western society, but he also made use of "confessions" extracted by force from allied POWs.

American Lt. James Stanley told in a sworn statement of how a confession to dropping germ warfare containers over North Korea was extracted from him after four months of interrogation and torture culminating in a mock firing squad and "a last chance to confess."

Burchett was "an active participant" in the production and distribution of "confessions" extracted from USAF Lieutenants Quinn, Enoch, O'Neal and Kniss. Kniss said Burchett personally threatened him with "drastic measures" when he said the confessions were fake and forced, in the presence of two French visitors.

Derek Kinne, an English POW in North Korea, called Burchett a "son of a bitch" for his propaganda talk and was told by Burchett, "I could have you shot." An hour after the incident, two guards came and took him away, saying he had a bad attitude "in the way I'd talked to Comrade Burchett." He was kept in solitary confinement for over a year, beaten daily and constantly pressed to sign a confession, one passage of which required that he admit to the crime of "a hostile attitude to Comrade Burchett!"

Several POWs testified that Burchett had appeared at their camp wearing a Chinese military uniform.

Australian government records seen by Prof. Manne report U.S. intelligence as quoting a North Korean defecting officer as saying Burchett worked directly on the orders of Gen. Chung San Man of the North Korean Foreign Ministry. The same defector said many stories attributed to Burchett had in fact been composed in the North Korean Ministry of Culture and Propaganda.

Burchett and the British Communist journalist Alan Winnington practiced manipulation of the Western reporters covering the peace talks at Panmunjom. In a letter to his father Burchett wrote: "Today when POW lists were released, most of the American press were virtually crawling on their

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